

Crisis team recruiting new members

BY JENNIFER E. WEST

Nucleus staff writer

If you want to be part of a team that provides "real-world" crisis intervention to people exposed to highly stressful incidents, your opportunity has arrived.

The Kirtland AFB Critical Incident Stress Management Team is recruiting new members to provide an essential base resource. A basic training and certification class will be conducted July 9-10 in the Distance Learning Center for 30 active duty military or civilian employees.

The team is an Air Force-mandated, all-volunteer team sanctioned by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation. The CISM team members meet quarterly for training on special topics and to practice team response skills. When a critical event occurs, members are notified and may be called to provide services.

Capt. Paul Milazzo of the Life Skills and Support Center and a team chief of the team, said team members here have provided support to the TEAM KIRTLAND community during crises involving suicide, motor vehicle accidents and fatality and injury to a

child. They also provide consultation to commanders, education on prevention of traumatic stress, and one-on-one crisis intervention sessions.

Incidents in which team members might also be called could include line of duty deaths, aircraft mishaps, acts of terrorism, natural disasters and deployment to war zones.

"Like learning CPR," Captain Milazzo said, "this basic certification training will help team members learn skills they can take with them to other bases or use in their community. They will benefit by knowing how to protect themselves and to assist family and friends during critical events."

Maj. John F. Leckie, another team chief and Behavioral Health Flight commander, said, "By becoming a part of the CISM team, you will be able to prevent and relieve suffering that will come from future accidents and tragic occurrence."

Those skills, Captain Milazzo added, have direct application when military members deploy. Team members can help troops learn better stress prevention skills and reduce traumatic reactions to severe war conditions.

The team's original mission was assisting first responders at tragedies,

but crisis intervention services such as "debriefings" may be offered for others not on scene but affected emotionally by traumatic events. But the true role of crisis intervention, particularly with military members, is ultimately a matter of mission readiness, getting personnel back on duty and functioning better at work and with their families.

CISM debriefing is a group approach designed to help lessen the negative emotional impact for victims by normalizing their stress reactions, creating a safe structure for people to talk about their experience and providing education about healthy self-care habits.

Volunteers should be comfortable working in a team setting and be able to listen calmly to distressed people without judging, directing or giving advice. Victims may need to express their feeling about things that are extremely distressing or downright gory, so the CISM team member's ability to listen empathically is an essential skill.

Karen Elquist, a team member who works in the 377th Mission Support Squadron as a unit training manager, has participated in a CISM de-

briefing on Kirtland, and also is an emergency medical technician, working off base.

"When you are in there with folks who've lost someone or had some sort of tragedy, been through something, you do a lot of listening more than talking. We do very little talking as team members.

"We're there to listen, not there to record or question anyone. We don't take notes," Ms. Elquist said. "We develop a trust with folks who are in the group...let them get their emotions out...there is not judgment in that room."

Team members aren't required to act aloof or "clinical," Ms. Elquist noted. "While you are empathizing, you can shed a tear or smile—it's OK to let some emotion show."

Ms. Elquist's commitment to the CISM team has brought her decision to join the New Mexico team. Members trained at Kirtland AFB become eligible to participate in regional and state CISM chapters.

Contact Capt. Paul Milazzo, 846-3305 or Ms. Elquist, 853-3080 for information about the training or to obtain a membership application for the upcoming training.

Air Force approves GWOT Expeditionary Medal

RANDOLPH AFB, Texas—The Air Force has authorized wear of the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary medal approved by President Bush last year.

The DOD campaign medal applies to active-duty, Reserve and Guard members deployed abroad on or after Sept. 11, 2001, for Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"The criterion is pretty clear, so members who believe they are eligible can begin wearing it," said Tech. Sgt. Jeff Simmons, superintendent of the Air Force Personnel Center Recognition Programs Branch here.

To qualify, an individual must have been assigned or attached to a unit in OEF/OIF and served 30 consecutive days or 60 non-consecutive days in one of the following specific



geographic areas: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bulgaria (Bourgas), Crete, Cyprus, Diego Garcia, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Romania (Constanta), Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey (east of 35 degrees east latitude), Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Yemen, that portion of the Arabian Sea north of 10 degrees north latitude and west of 68 degrees longitude, Bab el Mandeb, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Aqaba, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Suez, that portion of the Mediterranean Sea east of 28 degrees east longitude, Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Strait of Hormuz and the Suez Canal.

The medal will only be awarded

once, regardless of how many times an individual returns to serve in OEF or OIF. There are no service stars, or other devices authorized. However, battle stars may be authorized for personnel who engaged in combat. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the approving authority for battle stars.

The medal follows the Kosovo Campaign medal in precedence and can be viewed at www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2003/200303134a.jpg.

The medal will be issued by Military Personnel Flights when it becomes available and will also be available through AAFES later this year.

For more information, members can contact MPF Customer Service or call the Air Force Contact Center, 800-616-3775.

COMMAND CHIEF'S CHOICE

Airman 1st Class Larry Simon Jr.,

is a Bioenvironmental Engineering Technician assigned to the 377th Aerospace Medicine Squadron.

His responsibilities are to ensure safe and healthy work places for Team Kirtland members by risk analysis in the areas of industrial hygiene, occupational health, environmental protection and radiation safety. He makes sure work practices are not harmful by routinely performing air sampling, noise dosimetry, ventilation surveys and water sampling.

Additionally, Airman Simon works with the base chapel as the coordinator for the Daily Grind Cafe.

What do you like best about this assignment?

I like Kirtland AFB because of the people I have met here. I have made a lot of friends I hope to keep throughout my Air Force career. The weather here in Albuquerque is nice too. Being from the Holy Land, (The Great State of Iowa), I am not used to 365 days of warmth and no snow!

What is the most memorable moment in your Air Force career?

My most memorable moment would have to be getting in trouble in basic training for smiling too much. I did push ups every 20 minutes one

day because I had a smile first thing in the morning and my T.I. couldn't understand what was wrong with me and how I could be so happy all the time.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy playing Playstation 2 and hanging out with my friends. I also like to spend a lot of time with my little brother Rashad from the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program.

What person do you consider a great influence in your life?

There are many great influences in my life, from my grandpa John, to my mother. Most recently though, two great influences would probably be Lt. Col. Keith Harris and Maj. Steven D'Amanda. They have both taught me to have a positive outlook no matter what life throws at you.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

In 10 years, I see myself as a bioenvironmental engineering officer, well on my way to making General!

What is your main goal in life?

My main goal is to live life to the fullest and to retire a happy General from the U.S. Air Force.

Favorite Movie?

Batman, or anything with Jack Nicholson or Jet Li.

